

IAS 157/73
9 October 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Office of Strategic Research

SUBJECT : Preliminary Assessments

25X1 1. I am not convinced that the Preliminary Assessment is consistently serving its purpose, i.e., assessing the intelligence significance of developments observed in newly received imagery. I am especially concerned with the quality of the assessments for [redacted] and the apparent apathy towards the assessment on the part of certain DDI and DDS&T production components. I believe OSR, which has the overall assessment responsibility, needs to re-examine the purpose of the Assessment, and take appropriate action to ensure that it provides the best and most pertinent information to the DDI and DCI, and that it is prepared in a well-organized and expeditious manner.

2. There are several specific problems which we have identified in IAS as warranting special consideration. They are as follows:

a. The OSR assessment team leader should identify prior to his arrival in IAS those items that need to be reported, regardless of whether the information is positive or negative. There has been a tendency to omit negative information from assessments, even though it concerns critical items like Soviet missile test ranges and North Vietnamese logistics.

b. Frequently, production office analysts responsible for drafting certain assessment topics do not come to IAS the day of the assessment. When this occurs, items must be coordinated over the phone (a difficult and exacting process), or drafted by a Headquarters analyst present for the assessment who has little or no knowledge of that particular subject.

c. Certain topics like Soviet ICBM's and missile test ranges are always the last to be drafted and account for most delays in assessment preparations. I realize that these are normally the most complex subjects addressed in assessments. However, I believe if more thought were given to these subjects prior to arrival of the OSR team in IAS, the drafting of these items could be expedited.

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3. Again, I want to emphasize my concern over the Preliminary Assessment and stress the need to insure that we are providing the best and most pertinent information to the DDI and DCI. I am willing to discuss this matter further with you at any time.

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